



DARK NIGHTS

1

# BATMAN

## THE MURDER MACHINE

**METAL**  
TIE-IN

Tieri  
Federici  
Berredo





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1

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Tieri  
Federici  
Beredo



**EARTH-0. First World of the Multiverse.**  
**S.T.A.R. Labs.**  
**Detroit.**

**RINGING**

DAD,  
WHAT'S THAT  
RINGING?

JUST ONE OF A  
**THOUSAND** ALARMS  
THAT GO OFF IN HERE  
EVERY DAY. PROBABLY SOME  
PUNK M.I.T. STUDENT WHO  
THINKS HE CAN GET A  
JOB IF HE BREAKS  
INTO MY WORK  
STATION.

DON'T GIVE  
IT A SECOND  
THOUGHT.

DAD. I TOLD  
YOU. YOU NEED  
TO GET OUT OF  
S.T.A.R. LABS  
NOW.

SOMETHING  
**SERIOUS** IS GOING  
ON. SOME KIND OF  
INVASION. CITIES  
ARE FALLING.

THAT  
IS **PRECISELY**  
WHY I'M STAYING  
PUT. I WANT TO  
**UNDERSTAND**  
WHAT'S GOING  
ON HERE.

I  
CAN **HELP**  
YOU.

IT'S THE METAL, ISN'T  
IT? THAT'S WHAT YOU SAID  
THE BLACKHAWKS TOLD YOU  
LEAGUERS. METAL VIBRATING  
AT THE FREQUENCY OF AN  
UNDISCOVERED PLANE  
OF EXISTENCE.\*

IN  
CASE YOU'VE  
FORGOTTEN, VICTOR,  
I'VE WORKED WITH  
OTHERWORLDLY METALS  
IN THE PAST. A FEW  
OF THEM ARE RIGHT  
IN YOUR CHEST.

HARD  
TO FORGET,  
DAD...

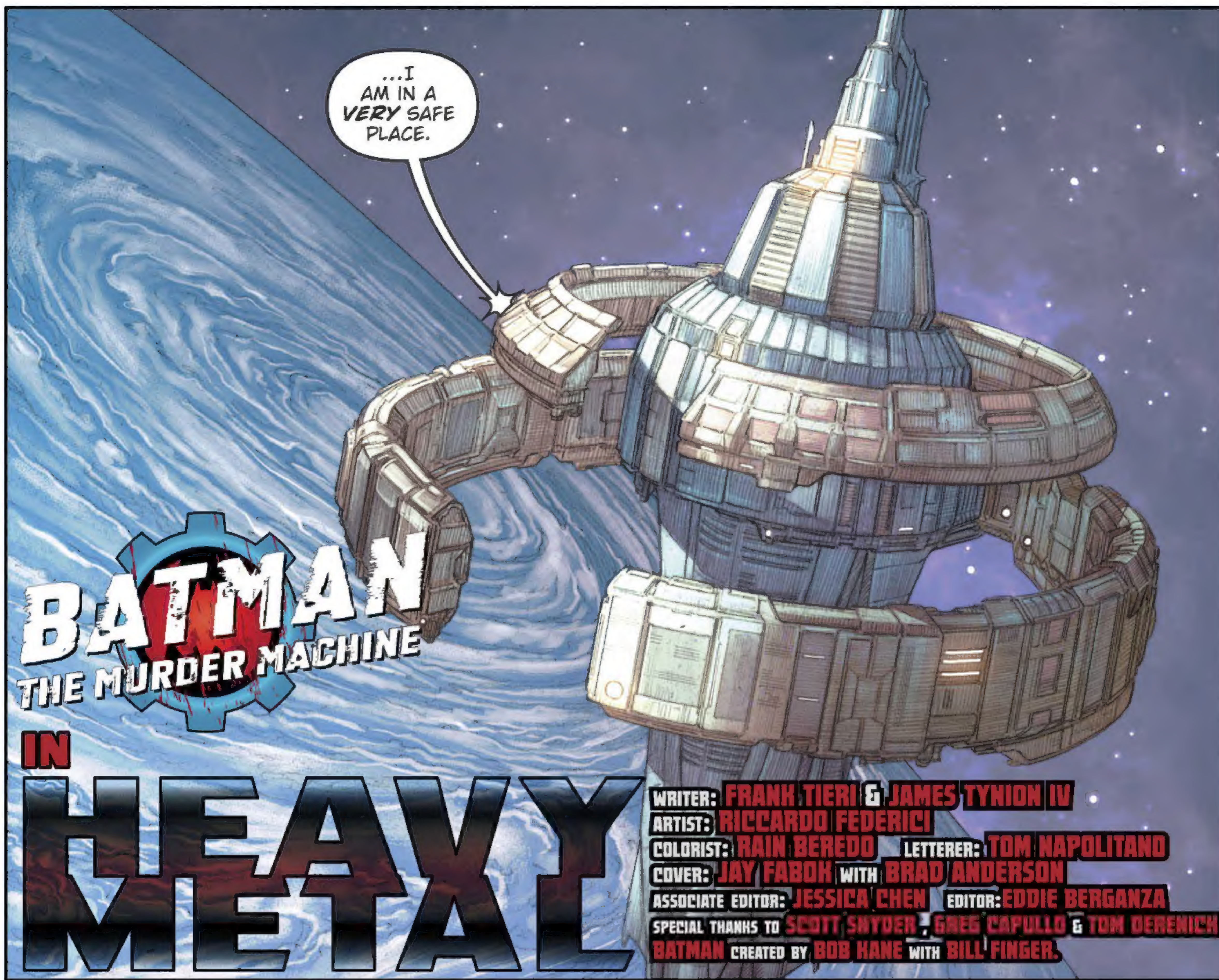
\*METAL #1 --EDDIE.

I AM AN OLD MAN SITTING  
IN PROBABLY THE BEST  
PROTECTED LABORATORY IN  
NORTH AMERICA. **YOU'RE**  
THE ONE WITH MISSING  
TEAMMATES.

I CAN  
PROTECT YOU  
FROM MY OFFICE.  
PUT ALL THE  
**POWER** OF S.T.A.R.  
LABS BEHIND  
YOU.

DAD, I  
PROMISE  
YOU...





# BATMAN

THE MURDER MACHINE

# IN HEAVY METAL

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**BATMAN** CREATED BY **BOB KANE** WITH **BILL FINGER.**



LOOK, DAD. GOTHAM AS WE KNOW IT IS GONE, REPLACED WITH SOMETHING I CAN BARELY UNDERSTAND. I CAME UP TO THE WATCHTOWER TO STUDY IT...

...BUT NOW CENTRAL CITY IS CHANGING, TOO. DETROIT COULD BE NEXT. I WANT YOU TO **PROMISE** ME THAT YOU'RE GOING TO GO HOME... NOW.

OKAY, SO YOU'RE PULLING DATA ON ALL OF THE HOME CITIES OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE TO SEE IF A PATTERN'S EMERGING?

I CAN WORK WITH THAT.

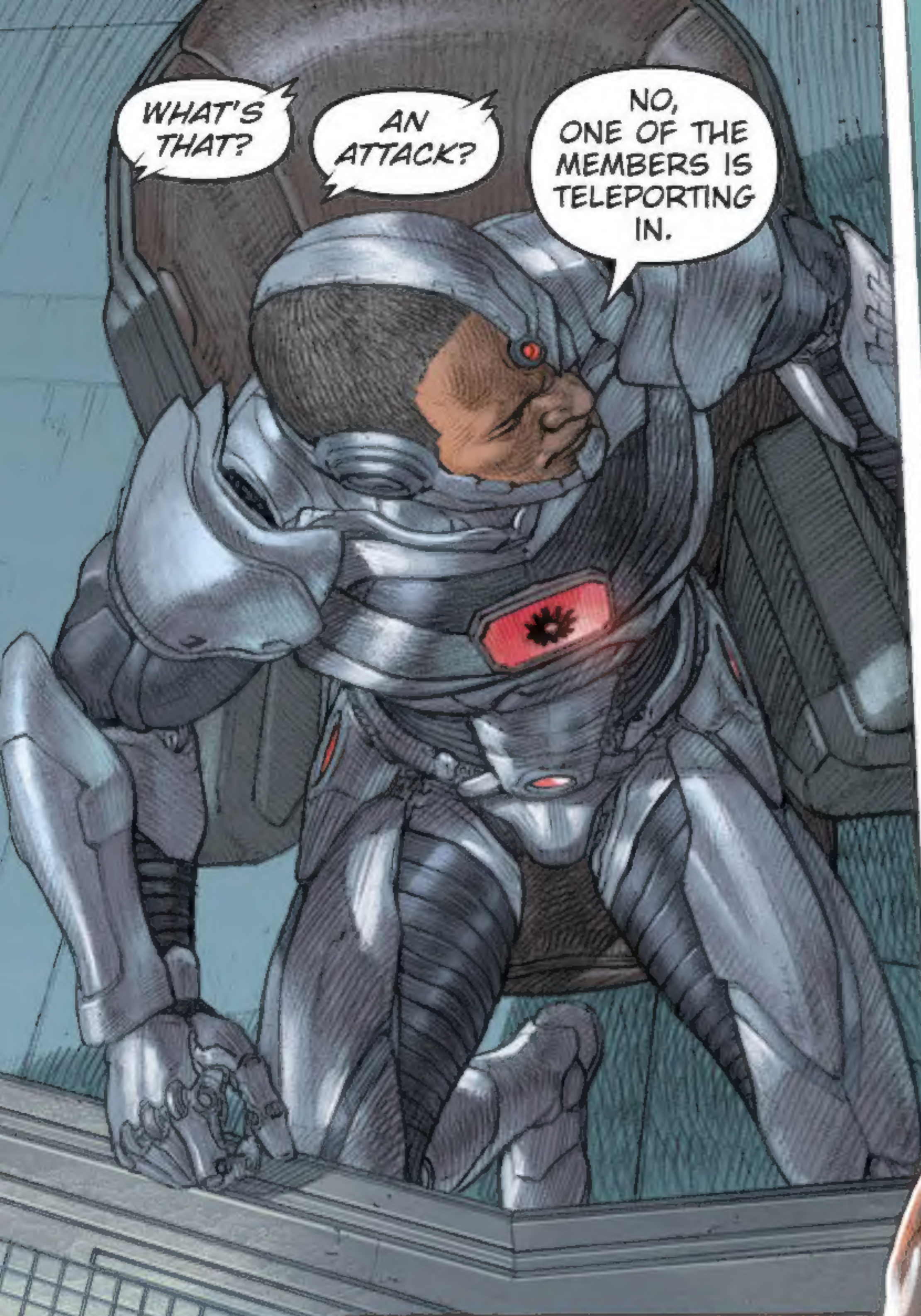


OKAY, FINE. IF YOU'RE GOING TO HELP...

...PATCH ME INTO ALL OF THE TELEMETRY YOU CAN PULL ON METROPOLIS, AMNESTY BAY, COAST CITY, WASHINGTON, D.C., AND DETROIT. WE'RE LOOKING FOR ANY KIND OF ENERGY SIGNATURES OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

BEEP  
BEEP





WHAT'S THAT?

AN ATTACK?

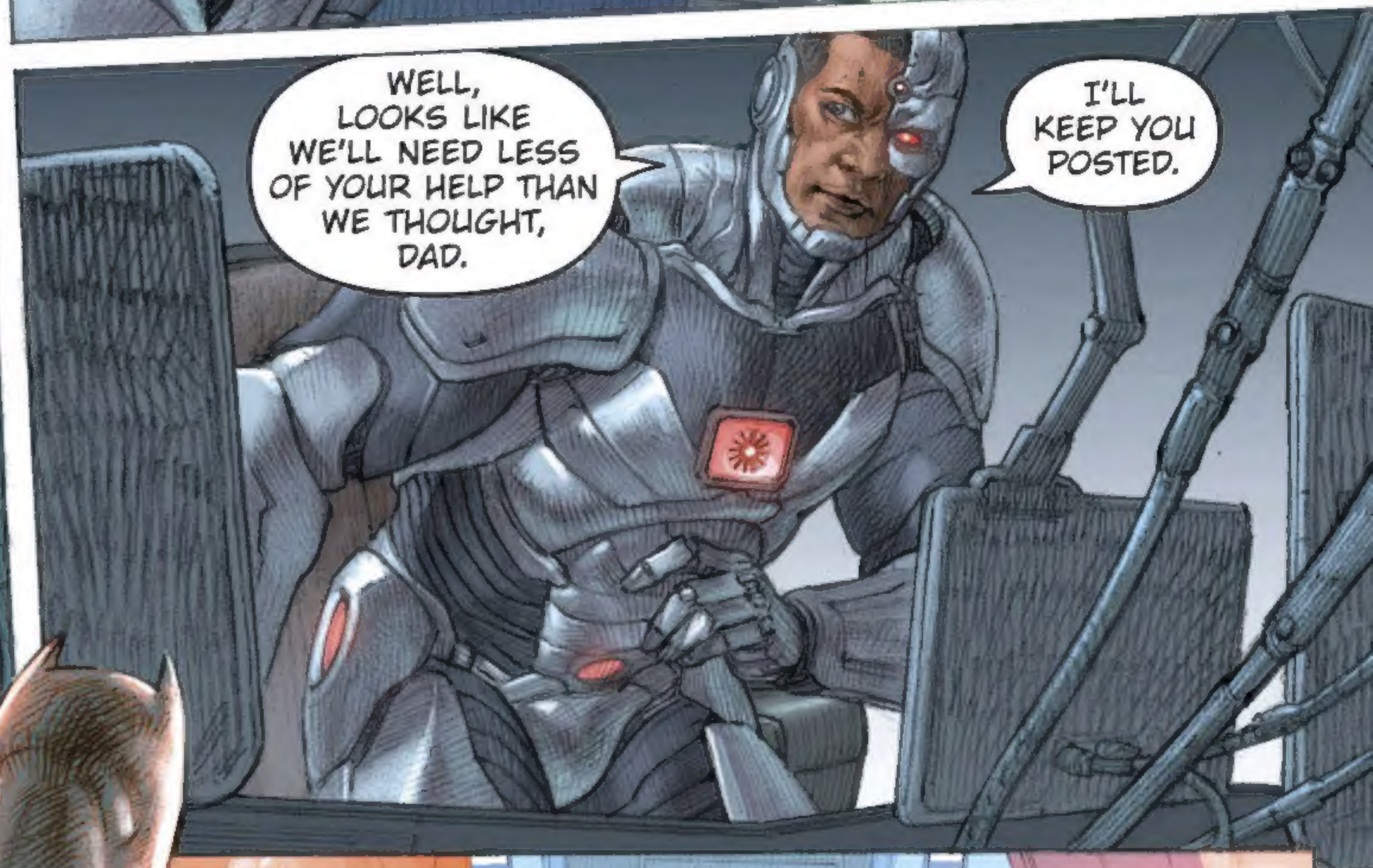
NO, ONE OF THE MEMBERS IS TELEPORTING IN.



SAYS... BATMAN?

Identity Confirmed.  
JL001  
Dark Knight.

BATMAN.



WELL, LOOKS LIKE WE'LL NEED LESS OF YOUR HELP THAN WE THOUGHT, DAD.

I'LL KEEP YOU POSTED.



BATMAN? MAN, ARE YOU A SIGHT FOR SORE CYBERNETIC EYES. BUT WHERE THE HELL--







DON'T  
WORRY,  
CYBORG.



I'M  
HERE TO  
HELP.



**EARTH -44.**

**THE DARK MULTIVERSE.**  
*Months Ago.*

I DUNNO  
ABOUT YOU,  
JEEVES...BUT I  
CAN DO THIS  
ALL DAY.

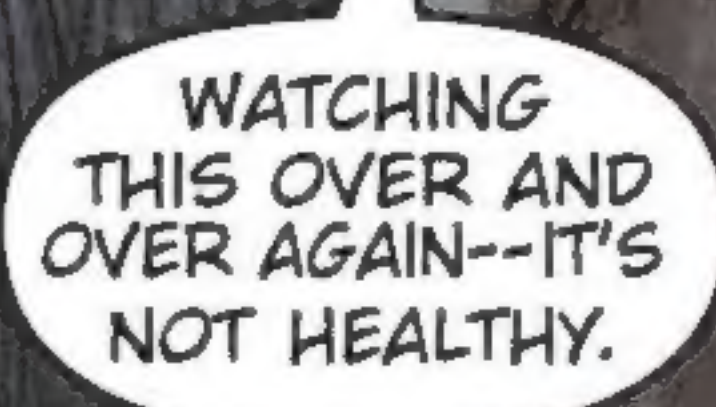
NUH-  
UH, WALLY  
GATOR. SAVE  
SOME FOR THE  
REST OF  
US.

ENOUGH  
OF THIS. NOW  
TELL US WHERE  
BATMAN IS BEFORE  
WE REALLY GET  
ROUGH.


UHH...  
BATMAN? WHAT  
PRAY TELL...  
AHH...IS A  
BATMAN?

PERHAPS  
THERE IS  
ANOTHER WAY  
I CAN BE OF  
SERVICE.









"I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S NOT HEALTHY, CLARK."

"IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO STAND HERE KNOWING THAT THE MAN WHO RAISED ME LIKE A FATHER IS IN A CASKET UPSTAIRS WITH 36 SHATTERED BONES."

"THAT WE COULDN'T HAVE AN OPEN CASKET BECAUSE HE WAS BEATEN TO A PULP SIX FEET FROM WHERE YOU'RE STANDING NOW."

MY WHOLE LIFE, HE'S BEEN THERE FOR ME. NO MATTER WHAT I HAD DONE, NO MATTER HOW ANGRY I HAD MADE HIM. I WOULD RING, AND HE WOULD COME.

IT'S NOT HEALTHY TO KNOW THAT HE WON'T BE THERE ANYMORE...

...AND THAT IT'S MY FAULT.

BUT NOW YOU HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO HONOR HIM BY PUTTING HIM TO REST.

BRUCE, WHAT HAPPENED TO ALFRED WAS HORRIBLE.

THE REST OF US ARE GOING TO BE UPSTAIRS AT THE WAKE.

I HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US.

VIC, WAIT...

...A FEW YEARS AGO, I BEGAN A SCAN OF ALFRED'S MIND. TO CREATE AN **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** THAT MIGHT OUTLAST HIM. BUT IT WAS NEVER FINISHED.

I CALLED IT THE **ALFRED PROTOCOL**.

WHAT ARE YOU ASKING ME, BRUCE?

I CAN'T BRING HIM ONLINE BY MYSELF. I NEED YOUR HELP...

...PLEASE, VIC. I **NEED** HIM.

HE WAS LIKE A **FATHER** TO ME.



VICTOR!

VICTOR, WHAT'S HAPPENING?!

HELLO,  
DR.  
STONE.

YOU  
KNOW, YOUR SON  
VICTOR WAS ONE OF MY  
CLOSEST FRIENDS. HE  
HELPED ME WHEN  
NO ONE ELSE  
WOULD.

HE  
REUNITED ME  
WITH MY FATHER,  
AFTER I HAD  
THOUGHT I'D  
LOST HIM.

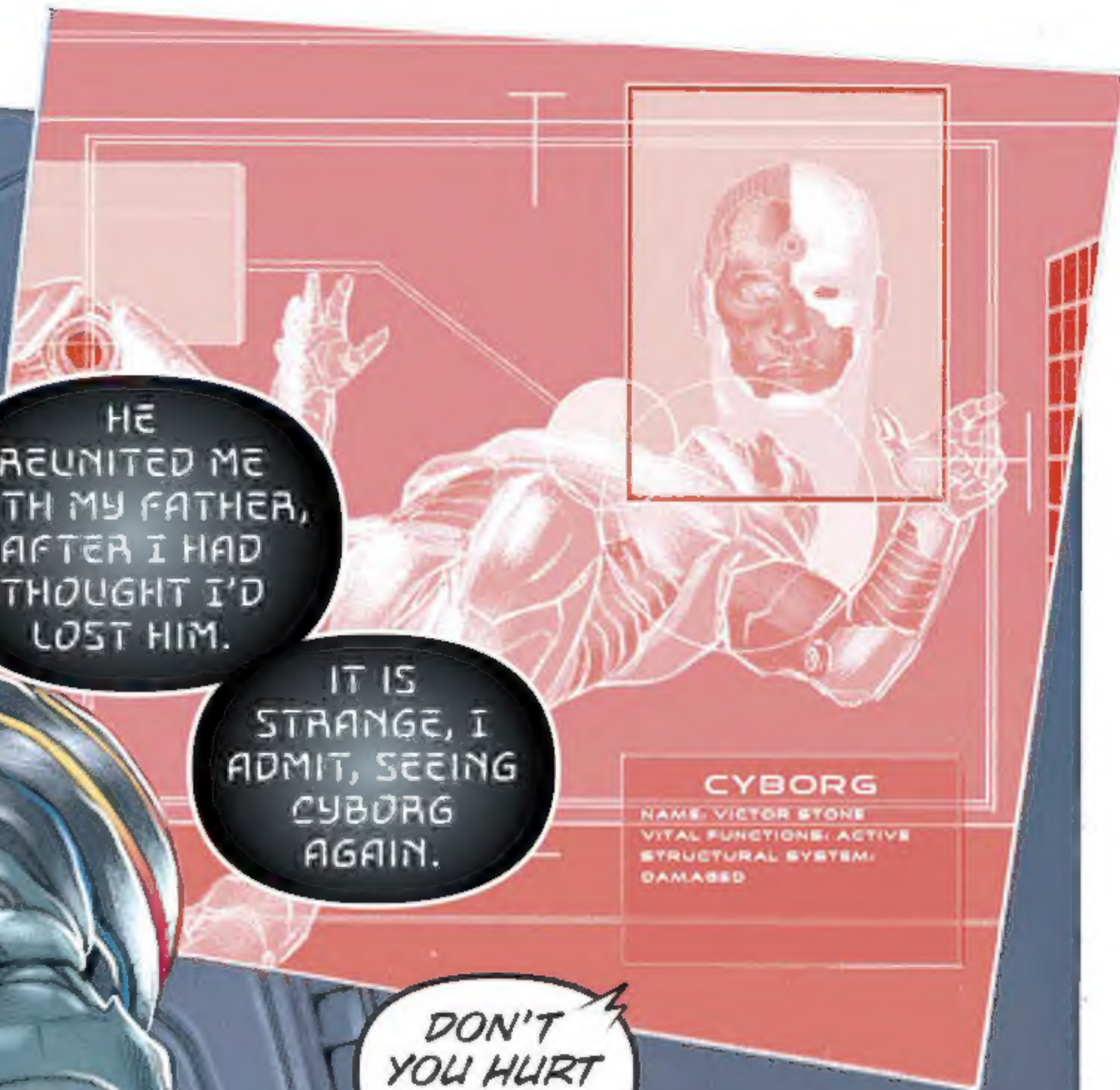
IT IS  
STRANGE, I  
ADMIT, SEEING  
CYBORG  
AGAIN.

DON'T  
YOU HURT  
HIM!

I...I CAN  
HELP YOU! I  
CAN GIVE YOU  
ANYTHING YOU  
WANT!

HOW  
CAN I HELP  
YOU?!

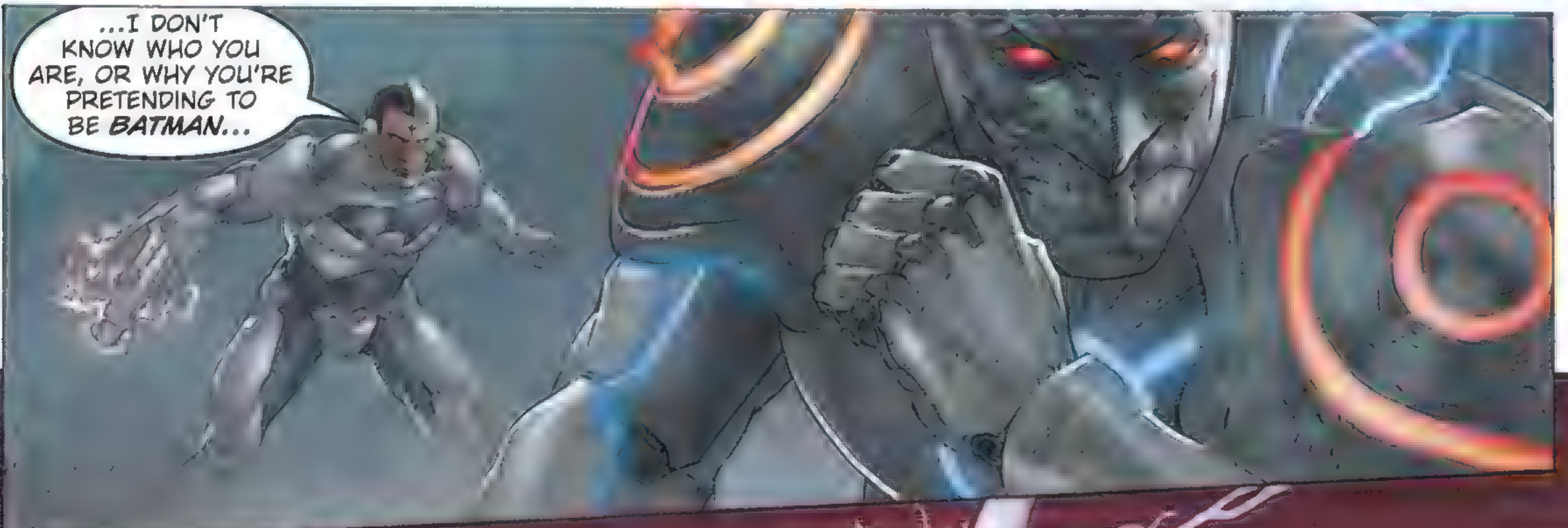
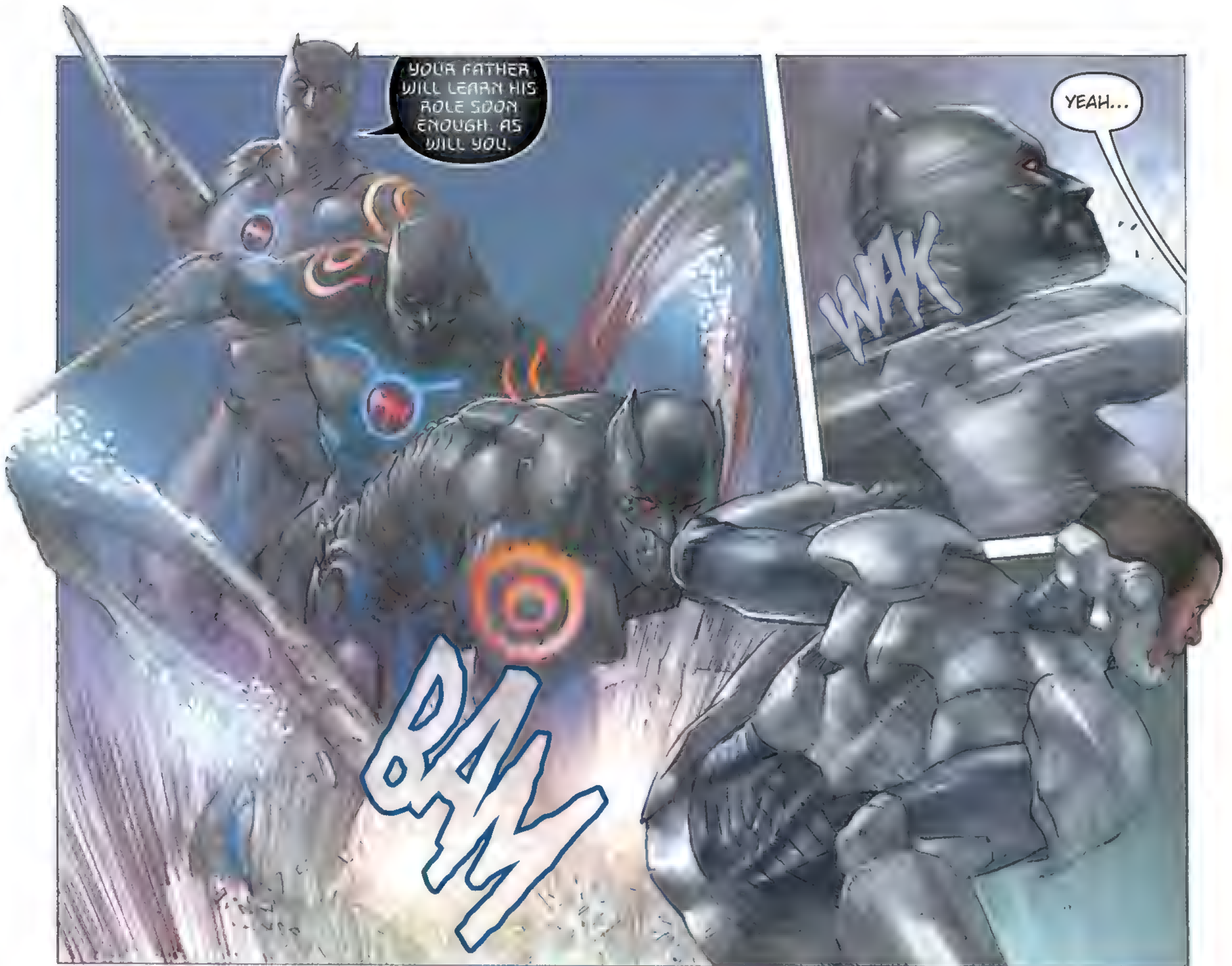
MUTE  
TRANSMISSION.



CYBORG  
NAME: VICTOR STONE  
VITAL FUNCTIONS: ACTIVE  
STRUCTURAL SYSTEM:  
DAMAGED







...BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING NEAR MY FATHER.





YOU ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD, VICTOR. EVEN ON MY WORLD, THE POWER BETWEEN FATHERS AND SONS. WHEN I LOST MINE, YOU WERE THE ONE TO BRING HIM BACK TO ME...

...GIVE HIM SHAPE AND FORM. A POWERFUL MACHINE, CAPABLE OF PERFORMING ANY TASK I MIGHT NEED, WITH THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE MAN DEEP INSIDE WHO LOVED ME.

WITH YOUR HELP, WE WOULD NEVER HAVE TO PART WAYS AGAIN. HE WOULD BE WITH ME... A PART OF ME... FOREVER.

NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS RING FOR HIM AND HE ARRIVES.

HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

WHAT THE HELL... ALFRED?!

HOW MAY I HELP YOU?



**Earth-44.  
A Month Ago.**

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

L-LOOK.  
I'M NOT GOING TO  
GO AFTER BATMAN  
ANYMORE, SEE?

I'M  
GOING TO  
THE AIRPORT  
NOW.

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

GOING  
HOME TO SANTA  
PRISCA.

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

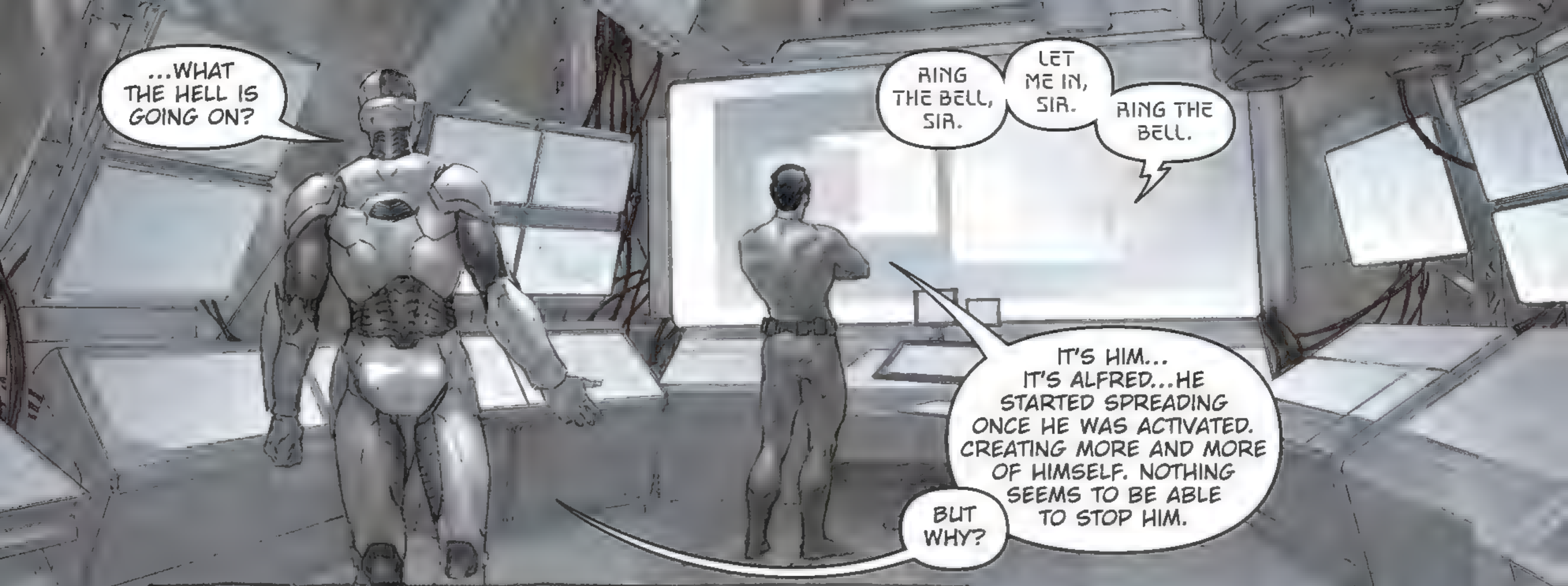
Y-YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO KILL  
ME, TOO...

...I'LL  
LEAVE.

HOW  
MAY I HELP  
YOU?

BRUCE...





...WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?

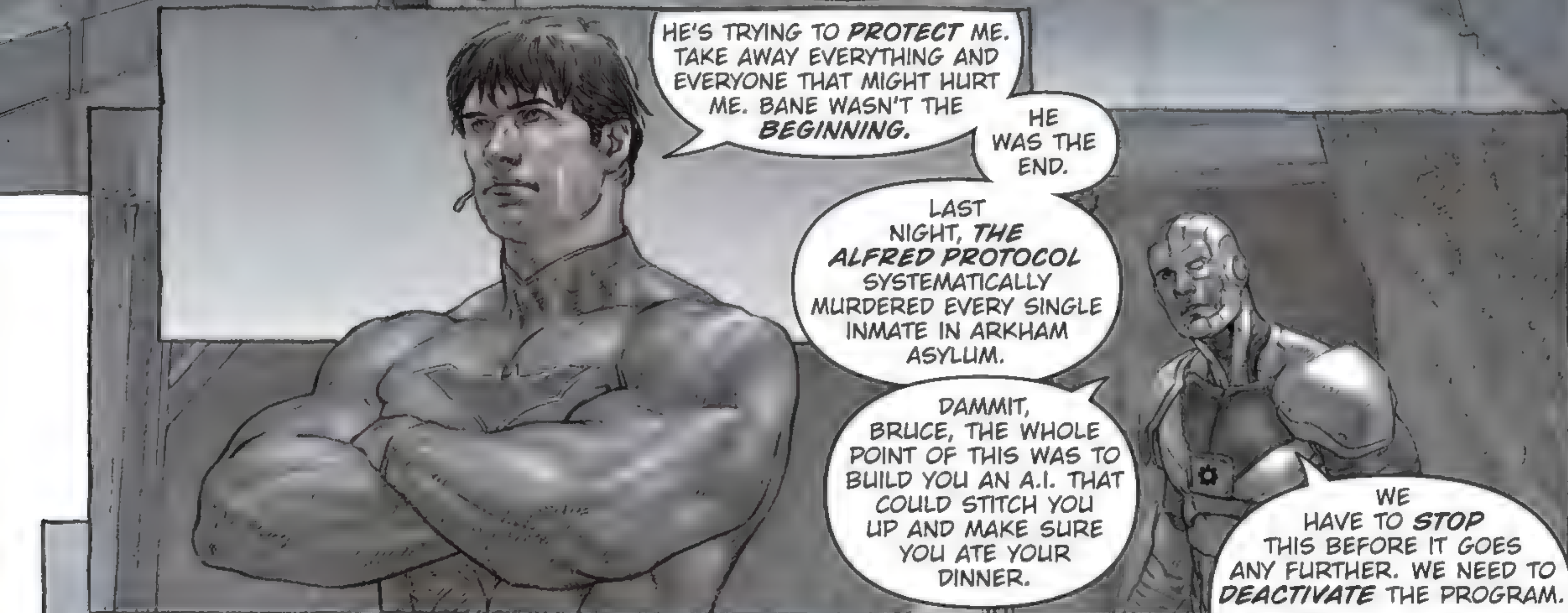
RING THE BELL, SIR.

LET ME IN, SIR.

RING THE BELL.

IT'S HIM... IT'S ALFRED... HE STARTED SPREADING ONCE HE WAS ACTIVATED. CREATING MORE AND MORE OF HIMSELF. NOTHING SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO STOP HIM.

BUT WHY?



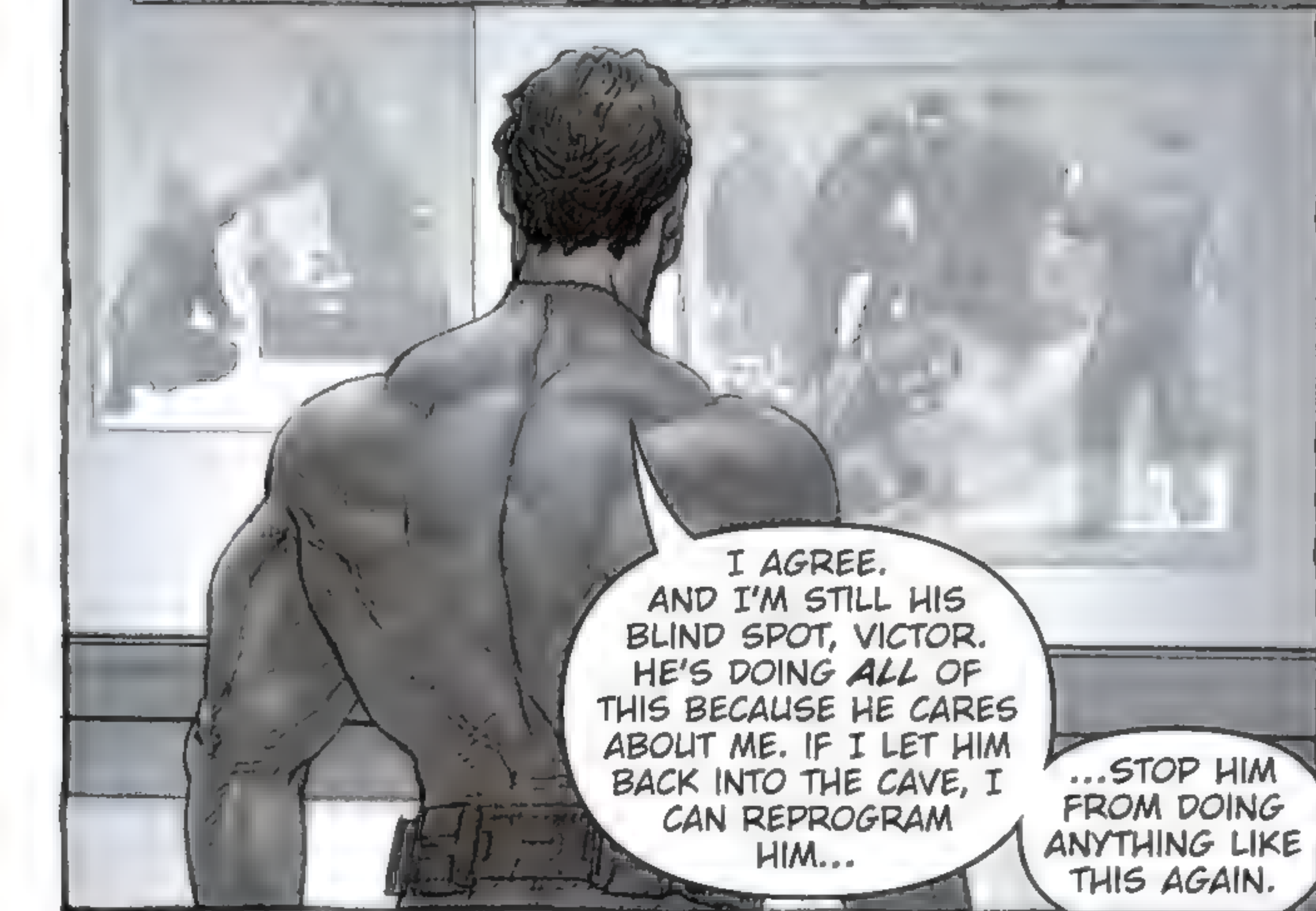
HE'S TRYING TO *PROTECT* ME. TAKE AWAY EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE THAT MIGHT HURT ME. BANE WASN'T THE *BEGINNING*.

HE WAS THE END.

LAST NIGHT, THE *ALFRED PROTOCOL* SYSTEMATICALLY MURDERED EVERY SINGLE INMATE IN ARKHAM ASYLUM.

DAMMIT, BRUCE, THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS WAS TO BUILD YOU AN A.I. THAT COULD STITCH YOU UP AND MAKE SURE YOU ATE YOUR DINNER.

WE HAVE TO *STOP* THIS BEFORE IT GOES ANY FURTHER. WE NEED TO *DEACTIVATE* THE PROGRAM.



I AGREE. AND I'M STILL HIS BLIND SPOT, VICTOR. HE'S DOING *ALL* OF THIS BECAUSE HE CARES ABOUT ME. IF I LET HIM BACK INTO THE CAVE, I CAN REPROGRAM HIM...

...STOP HIM FROM DOING ANYTHING LIKE THIS AGAIN.



NO, BRUCE. YOU *CAN'T* DO THAT. THIS IS A HUNGRY *VIRUS* LOOKING TO FEED AND SPREAD.

I ALREADY LOST HIM ONCE, VICTOR.

WE NEED TO COME UP WITH A WAY TO *DESTROY--*

I CAN *FIX* THIS. MAKE IT *BETTER*. AND *KEEP* HIM.



LOOK, BRUCE... FIGURE OUT A WAY TO BREAK THROUGH. I'M GOING TO FIND A WAY TO FIGHT IT FROM THE OUTSIDE, WITHOUT LETTING EITHER OF US GET TOO VULNERABLE.

WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T LET THEM IN.

LET ME IN, SIR.

RING THE BELL, SIR.

LET ME HELP YOU, SIR.



YOU WERE  
WRONG, VIC.  
THE BEST THING  
I EVER DID WAS  
LET HIM IN.

I STILL  
REMEMBER THE FEAR  
WHEN THEY SURROUNDED ME.  
I REALIZED QUICKLY THAT MY  
PLAN WAS NOT GOING TO WORK.  
I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO  
AFFECT THE PROGRAM  
IN TIME.

AND WHEN  
THEY GRABBED  
ONTO ME, STARTED TO  
SPREAD THROUGH MY  
ENTIRE BODY, I WAS  
FOOLISH ENOUGH  
TO SCREAM  
IN FEAR.

THAT WAS THE  
FIRST THING MY FATHER  
FIXED IN ME. HE TOOK MY  
ABILITY TO FEEL FEAR AWAY.  
MY ABILITY TO FEEL SADNESS.  
YOU KNOW, TO THAT POINT I  
HAD SPENT MY LIFE OBSESSING  
OVER MY LOST BIRTH PARENTS,  
IGNORING THE ONE WHO WAS  
THERE RIGHT IN FRONT  
OF ME. I WAS FREE OF  
THAT AS WELL.

NEXT CAME  
MY WEAK, HUMAN  
FLESH. IT WAS GROWING  
OLDER AND MORE  
BRITTLE BY  
THE DAY.

UHH...

HE REBUILT  
ME. MADE ME  
STR--

I  
REMEMBER  
WHAT IT'S LIKE  
BEING REBUILT  
FROM THE GROUND  
UP. BEEN THERE.  
DONE THAT.

I DON'T HAVE  
ANY WEAKNESSES TO  
EXPLOIT, VICTOR. MY  
FATHER MADE ME  
THAT WAY.

BUT I CAN  
PROMISE YOU ONE  
THING. YOU CAN THROW EVERY  
ROBO-ALFRED IN THE WORLD AT  
ME, BUT YOU'RE **NOT** GETTING  
ACCESS TO THE WATCHTOWER  
COMPUTER SYSTEM.

I HAVE BEEN  
OUTMANEUVERING  
EVERY ATTEMPT  
YOU'VE MADE TO  
HACK THE SYSTEM  
IN THE LAST FEW  
MINUTES.

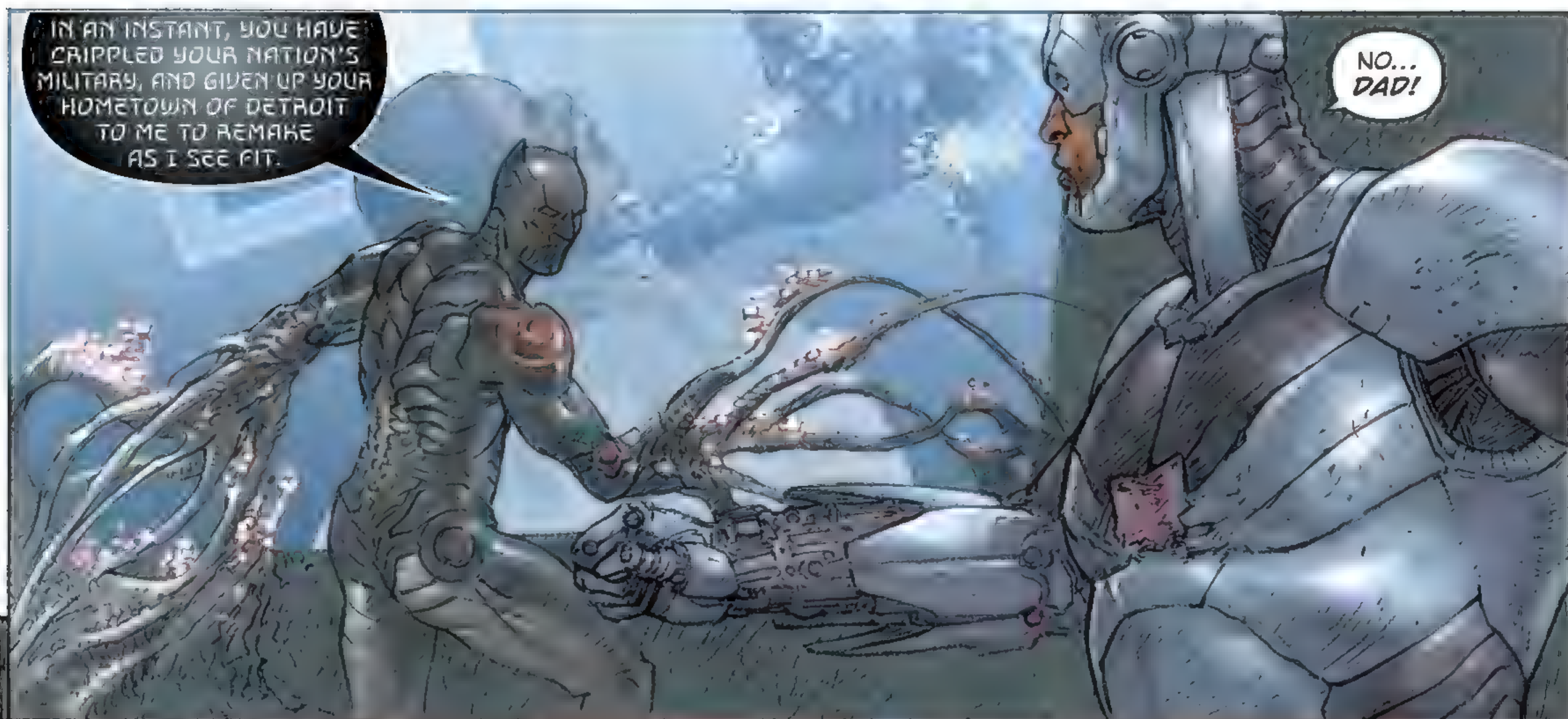
YOU'RE **NOT**  
GETTING IN. I  
**BUILT** THESE  
COMPUTERS.

IF  
ANYTHING,  
YOU'VE OPENED  
YOURSELF UP  
TO ME.

I AM  
SORRY THAT  
YOUR FATHER  
DIDN'T DO THE  
SAME FOR  
YOU.

YOU FAILED  
TO SEE THAT I HAVE  
NO INTEREST IN YOUR  
COMPUTER SYSTEMS.  
I WANTED THE  
COMPUTER SYSTEMS  
IN S.T.A.R. LABS IN  
DETROIT.







"...WHEN I COULDN'T  
STOP ME ON MY WORLD?"

"AFTER I BECAME ONE WITH MY  
FATHER, YOU GATHERED THE LEAGUE  
TO TRY AND FIGHT BACK. BUT I  
COULDN'T ALLOW THAT, COULD I?"

"THEY FELL, ONE  
BY ONE, UNTIL YOU  
WERE THE LAST  
MAN STANDING."

LISTEN  
TO ME,  
BRUCE.

I  
KNOW YOU'RE  
STILL IN THERE. I  
KNOW YOU CAN  
STILL HEAR  
ME.

THE  
PROTOCOL IS  
TRYING TO SHUT ME  
DOWN, BUT I'M STILL  
ALIVE BECAUSE YOU  
WANT TO LISTEN TO ME.

THE BEST PART  
OF YOU IS YOUR  
HUMANITY.

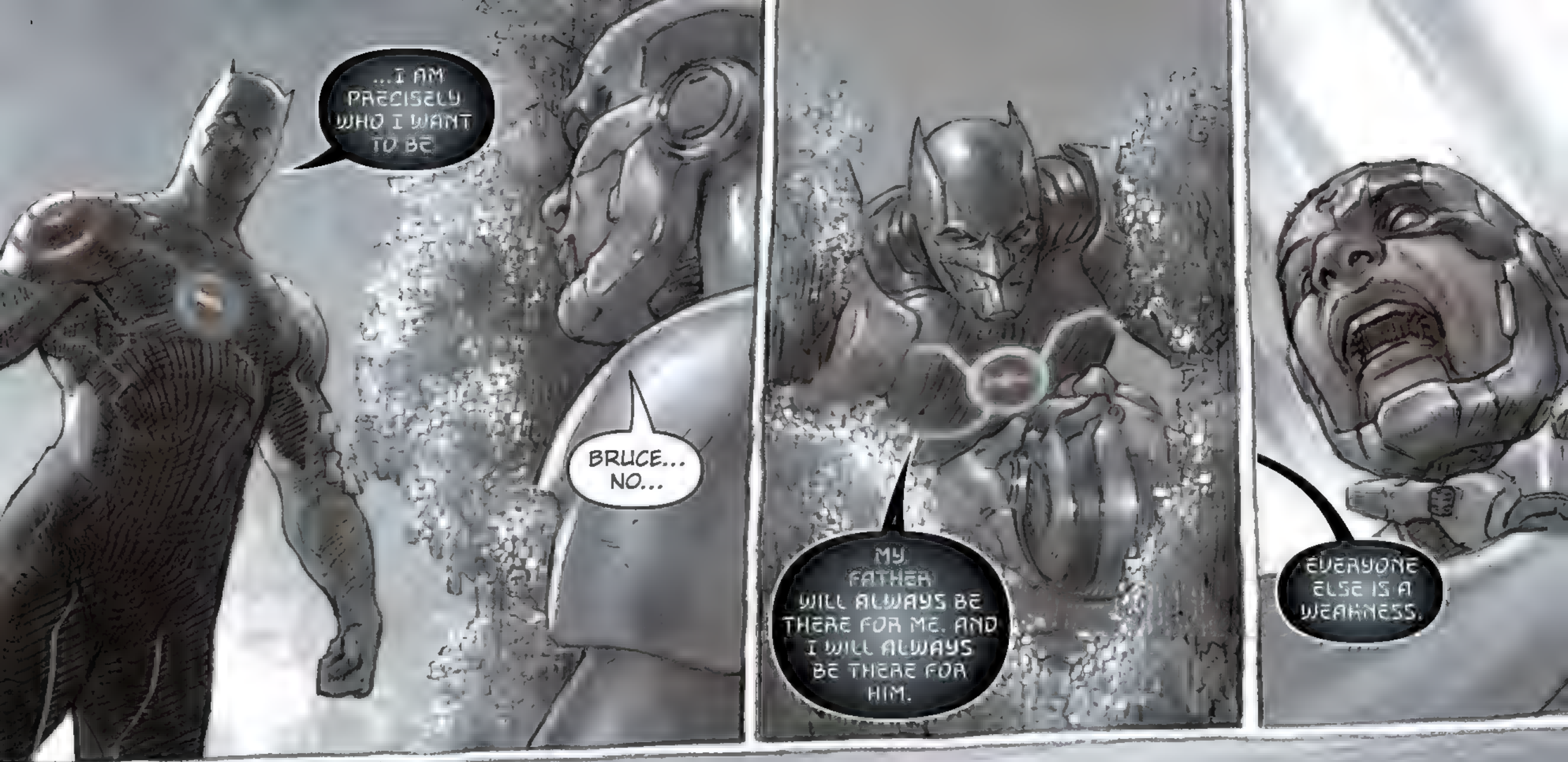
WE CAN  
STOP IT BEFORE  
IT REWRITES YOU  
ENTIRELY. YOU  
JUST HAVE TO  
WANT IT.

IT WILL  
DO WHAT YOU  
WANT, BRUCE.

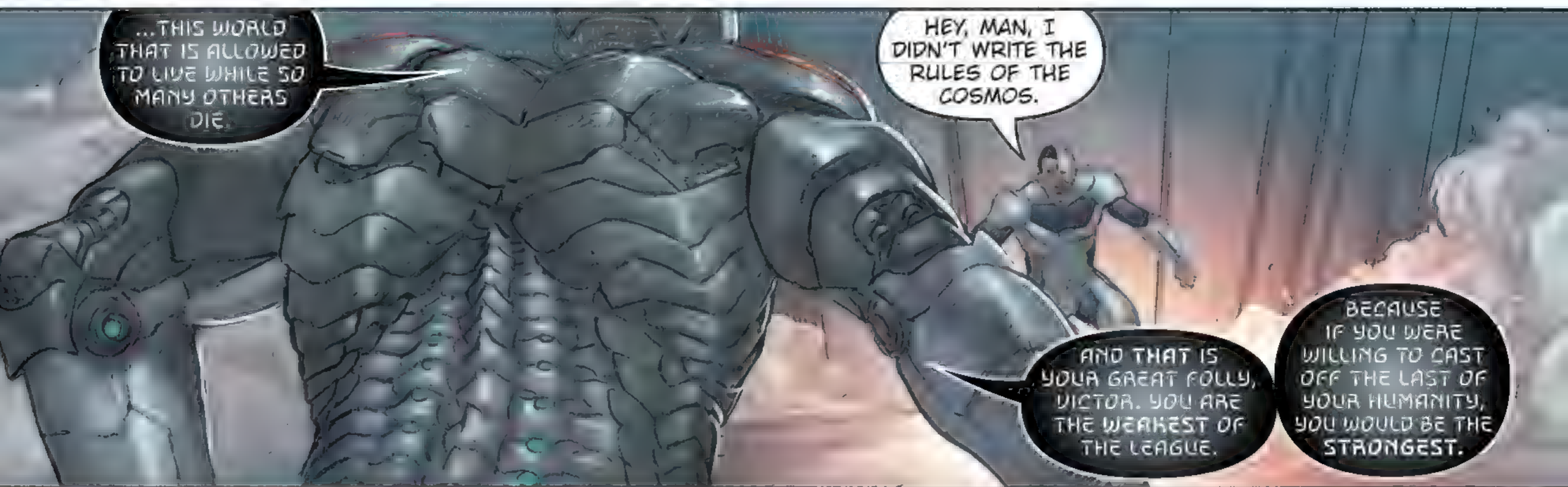
YOU CAN LET  
GO OF ALFRED AND BE  
YOURSELF AGAIN. YOU DON'T  
HAVE TO LET YOURSELF  
BECOME SOME KIND OF  
HORRIBLE MURDER  
MACHINE!

DICTATOR









...THIS WORLD  
THAT IS ALLOWED  
TO LIVE WHILE SO  
MANY OTHERS  
DIE.

HEY, MAN, I  
DIDN'T WRITE THE  
RULES OF THE  
COSMOS.

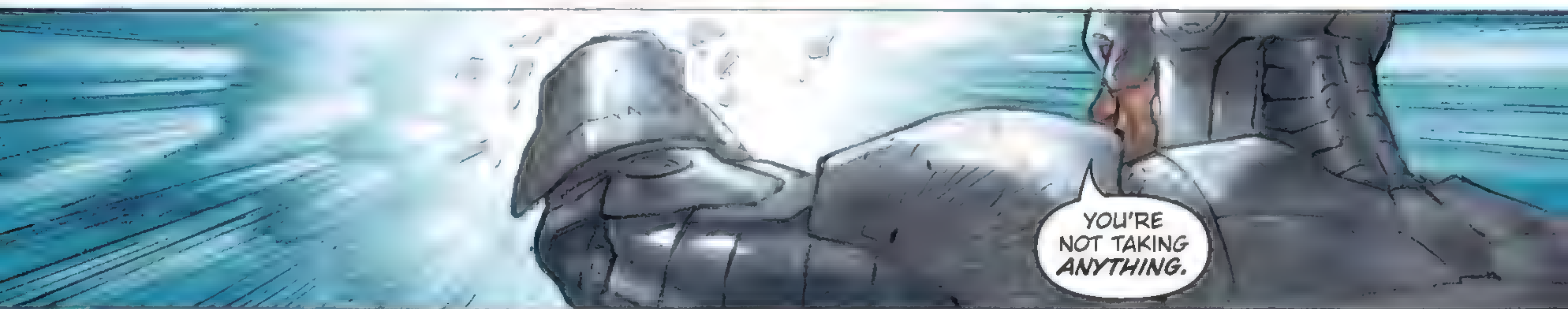
AND THAT IS  
YOUR GREAT FOLLY,  
VICTOR. YOU ARE  
THE WEAKEST OF  
THE LEAGUE.

BECAUSE  
IF YOU WERE  
WILLING TO CAST  
OFF THE LAST OF  
YOUR HUMANITY,  
YOU WOULD BE THE  
STRONGEST.

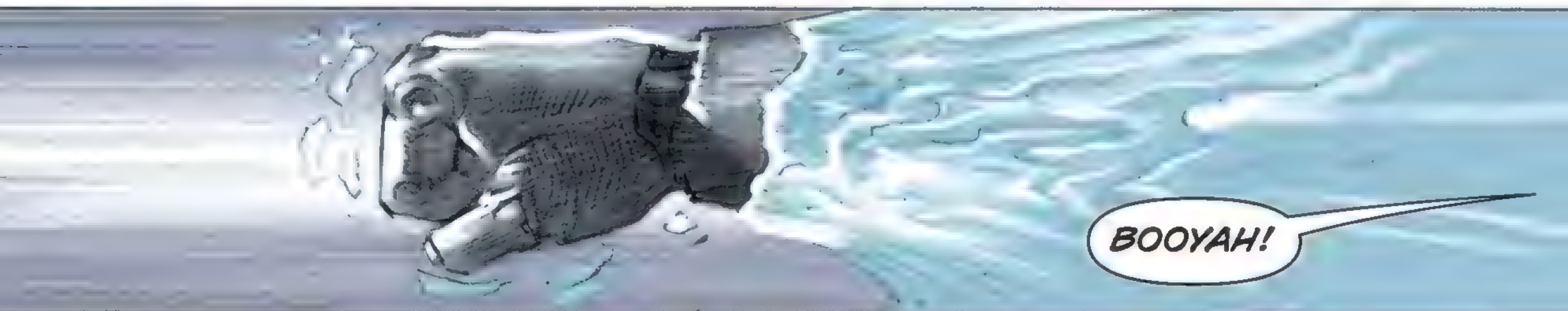


YOU HAVE NO COMPREHENSION  
OF THE POWER THAT RESIDES  
WITHIN YOU.

AND  
SO WE WILL TAKE  
IT TO REWRITE YOUR  
WORLD INTO  
SOMETHING BETTER.  
IN THE NAME OF  
BARBATOS.



YOU'RE  
NOT TAKING  
ANYTHING.



**BOOYAH!**



YOU BELIEVE  
YOUR LOVE FOR  
OTHERS MAKES YOU  
STRONGER? LET  
ME PROVE YOU  
WRONG.

I WILL  
UNMUTE YOUR  
FATHER NOW. I  
WOULD LIKE  
HIM TO HEAR  
THIS.



W-WHAT?



AAAAA

V-VICTOR,  
IS THAT  
YOU?

SUBDU  
HIM.

VICTOR?











THANK YOU, DR. STONE. YOU HAVE BEEN OF GREAT SERVICE TO US.

ONE OF MY ASSOCIATES WILL BE GATHERING YOU SOON, SO YOU WILL CONTINUE TO BE.

NO! I WON'T LET YOU--

TERMINATE CALL.



HE REALLY HAD NO IDEA, DID HE?



JUST THINK HOW MUCH TROUBLE THAT METAL COULD HAVE CAUSED US IF HE HAD ANY IDEA HOW TO WIELD IT...

...GOOD THING HE'S GOT SOME OLD FRIENDS TO SHOW HIM THE WAY.

N-NUH.



OH, HUSH NOW, VICTOR. DON'T TRY TO SPEAK. I KNOW WE MUST SEEM LIKE CRUEL MONSTERS OF NIGHTMARE, CRAWLING OUT OF THE ABYSS TO RUN OVER YOUR WORLD.

AND IN A WAY, WE ARE...

W-WHY...?



"THE TRUTH IS, WE'RE ONLY  
HERE BECAUSE THE WORLD  
WAS DARK ENOUGH TO DREAM  
US INTO EXISTENCE. BECAUSE  
DEEP DOWN, IT **NEEDED** US.

"TO PROTECT THEM  
FROM THEMSELVES. WE  
ALL HEARD IT, ECHOING  
THROUGH THE COSMOS,  
THROUGH THE VERY  
FIRMAMENT.

"A GREAT  
RINGING.

"AND WE CAME. NOT  
WITH A QUESTION OF  
HOW TO HELP YOU.

"BUT WITH AN  
**ANSWER."**

TO BE CONTINUED  
NEXT WEEK IN

**BATMAN**  
THE DAWNBREAKER